

Testimony of Edward L. Haynor
Opposed to Senate Bills 1, 2 and 3
before the Michigan Senate Competitiveness Committee
Senate Hearing Room, Ground Floor, Boji Tower
124 W. Allegan Street, Lansing, MI 48933
Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Sen. Mike Shirkey, Chair

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to testify before this committee. Although my testimony today is based upon my 40 years as a Michigan School Board Member at Newaygo Public Schools and NCRESA (Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency), as well as my 31 years of experience as a career & technical education instructor and administrator at the Newaygo County Career-Tech Center in Fremont, MI, my testimony is my own and not an official position of Newaygo Public Schools or NCRESA.

As a school board member, I have been involved in many construction projects amounting to millions of taxpayer dollars. After bond millages have been passed, the toughest job school board members have, is determining who are the best contractors and their workforces to do your project, in consideration of value = quality + cost. In a best case scenario, this is not an easy job even in consideration of having construction professionals, such as architects and construction managers assisting us, since many of these construction contractors/workers come from outside your area and once done, you'll likely never see them again.

At the Newaygo County Career-Tech Center we offer building trades and mechatronics programs that both contain construction industry occupations such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, cement work, roofing, drafting, and welding. As most informed citizens recognize, students need more skills than a high school diploma in order to be career ready, but not necessarily a 4-year degree. We work hard in Newaygo County to prepare our students for careers. How do we continue to market and promote Michigan's construction industry with students and parents, if good paying construction jobs are reduced to minimum wage jobs through the elimination of prevailing wage standards?

It's my understanding that Governor Snyder with support from many senators wants to expand career and technical education opportunities in Michigan through the next school budget. How can we possibly be successful with such an initiative, when it comes to students who desire

cooperatives where each entity pays equally into funding their training centers. Non-union contractors typically use community college programs in training their workers.

My daughter is marrying an electrician this Saturday, who received his apprenticeship training through Grand Rapids Community College, where he received his journey-person qualifications, which was sponsored and paid in part by his employer.

The elimination of prevailing wage in Michigan would harm the construction industry's ability to train their workers since they would likely not be able to afford to do so. Information that I have found in Colorado and Kansas that eliminated prevailing wage laws in the late 1980s experienced approximately a 40% reduction in construction apprenticeship programs.

Elected officials might be thinking, why do we care, shouldn't a "free market" be the deciding factor? It's been my experience that nothing is free and a free market is no exception. When any ideology trumps credible business practices; businesses, workers and citizens are in for troubled times.

I can't imagine why anyone would support the removal of such a strong business practice, as has been the case for many years, with Michigan's Prevailing Wage Laws.

Thank you and do you have any questions?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Haynor", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ed Haynor
Newaygo, MI